



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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May 12, 2015

The Honorable Tom McClintock
Chair
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Niki Tsongas
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas,

On April 10th, 2015 the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission) voted unanimously to support H.R. 1443: Grand Canyon Bison Management Act (H.R. 1443 or "Act"). We are writing to request that you hear H.R. 1443 at the next appropriate Federal Lands Subcommittee hearing.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission is comprised of five members appointed by the Governor pursuant to A.R.S. §38-211 and is the oversight body responsible for setting regulations and policies designed to manage wildlife. This five member board sets policy by rule and overall direction for the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) in a public process where issues are voted on after presentations from the Department and input from the public.

The Commission and Department manage wildlife in accordance with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which asserts that wildlife is held in public trust and not owned by any one person or entity, regardless of whether the animal is on public or private land or water. All wildlife is managed based on the overall public good. The North American Model allows non-frivolous use of wildlife, and relies on scientific research-based management. It recognizes that wildlife cannot be managed along political boundaries, so cooperation across boundaries is a necessity. The North American Model also relies on laws and enforcement, and provides the public a voice in wildlife management decisions.

Over the past few decades, the bison abundance, distribution, and movement in and near the Grand Canyon's North Rim, have impacted both natural and cultural resources within the Park.. Strategies used to date have not been effective at addressing the issues of over-abundant bison. When managed for appropriate abundance and distribution, bison can exist in harmony with ecological processes on the park and contribute to the quality of the recreational experience on and off the park for generations to come. The herd has few natural predators other than humans. Hunters can pursue bison in areas outside the national park by purchasing permits and tags from the state. However, because the herd spends the vast majority of their time on the park, hunting on adjacent National Forest lands has not been effective in reducing the herd to ecologically

appropriate levels. With approximately 52,000 acres of park territory in which to roam, and prime grazing land to support them, the bison have little incentive to leave their safe haven and wander outside park boundaries.

The Act would require both the U.S. Department of Interior and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to coordinate on producing a plan to manage bison using non-lethal means such as hazing, fencing and others and one that also allows sportsmen-volunteers holding a valid state-issued hunting license to assist in managing the bison population within the park through culling. The volunteers would then be legally authorized to remove the full bison carcass from the park. It is important to remember that this simple solution to a growing problem would be at no cost to the federal government and will be handled by trained volunteers.

The Commission implores you to hold a hearing on H.R. 1443 at the next appropriate Federal Lands Subcommittee hearing and become part of this common-sense solution to protect the Grand Canyon's natural and cultural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Mansell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Robert E. Mansell
Game and Fish Commission Chairman

CC:

Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick
Congressman Matt Salmon
Congressman David Schweikert
Congressman Trent Franks
Congresswoman Cynthia Lummis
Congressman Ryan Zinke
Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema
Governor Doug Ducey
Attorney General Mark Brnovich